

giving the access to the intelligent interconnecting device 1 from outside (for example, the managing computer 4) and inputs of the user identifier and the password are received.

5 Then, authentication processing for the inputted user identifier and password is performed (refer to a step S112 in FIG. 3).

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10 [0020] Here, the steps S110 and S112 are processed through execution of the generally known TCP/IP protocol. In other words, the TCP/IP protocol, which is premised to be provided in the intelligent interconnecting device 1 according to the embodiment of the present invention, as is explained above in the structure explanation, is
15 appropriately a TCP/IP protocol, in particular, capable of executing the authentication processing by using a user identifier and a password. As such a TCP/IP protocol, for example, TELNET is available. An explanation of a detailed processing procedure
20 of this protocol is omitted here.

Then, after the authentication processing (refer to the step S112 in FIG. 3) is over, it is judged whether or not the authentication is given (refer to a step S114 in FIG. 3). Here, 'the
25 authentication is given' means that the user

identifier and the password are identical with those set in advance in the storage section 9 and the external apparatus giving the access is authenticated. 'The authentication is not given'

5 means that the user identifier and the password are nonidentical with those set in advance in the storage section 9 and the external apparatus giving the access is not authenticated.

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10 **[0021]** When it is judged in the step S114 that the authentication is not given, that is, the external apparatus is not authenticated (NO), a response to the external apparatus is determined to be unallowable (refer to a step S122 in FIG. 3), a series of the subroutine processing is finished, 15 and the procedure returns to the main routine processing for the time being. Then, in the main routine processing, processing for a case in which the response to the external apparatus is determined to be unallowable is performed 20 according to the provided TCP/IP protocol.

Meanwhile, when it is judged in the step S114 that the authentication is given (YES), the response to the access from the external apparatus is determined to be allowable (refer to a step S116 25 in FIG. 3) and then, it is judged whether or not

the procedure so far is the procedure for the first access from the external apparatus (refer to a step S118 in FIG. 3). Then, when the access from the external apparatus is judged to be the first access (YES), the procedure proceeds to a step S120 described next. Meanwhile, when the access is not judged to be the first access (NO), a series of the subroutine processing is finished and the procedure returns to the main routine processing since processing in the step 120 described next has already been carried out for the access and need not be repeated again.

【0022】 In the processing of the step S120, an IP address of a source (the external apparatus) included in a packet which is transmitted from the external apparatus (hereinafter, referred to as a 'source IP address') is extracted and stored in a predetermined area of the storage section 9 (refer to the step S120 in FIG. 3). Note that the storage area for the source IP address in this case is appropriately an area whose storage content is not erased even when the power supply is cut off.

After the processing of the step S120 is over, a series of the subroutine processing is finished and the procedure returns to the main routine.